

Travel Through History

By TIFFANY FRANKE

Travel the back roads of seven local towns to enter the front doors of 12 treasured historic homes on the new scenic tour, Back Roads of the South Shore. Three of Duxbury's historic homes are featured on the tour that is celebrating its opening this weekend.

Duxbury's included sights frame the route's nearly 200-year journey through history. The Alden House, built in the 1650's by the famous Pilgrim couple John and Priscilla Alden, is the oldest home on the tour. The Gershom Bradford and King Caesar Houses in Duxbury represent the Federal style of the 1820's, the most modern of the Back Roads collection.

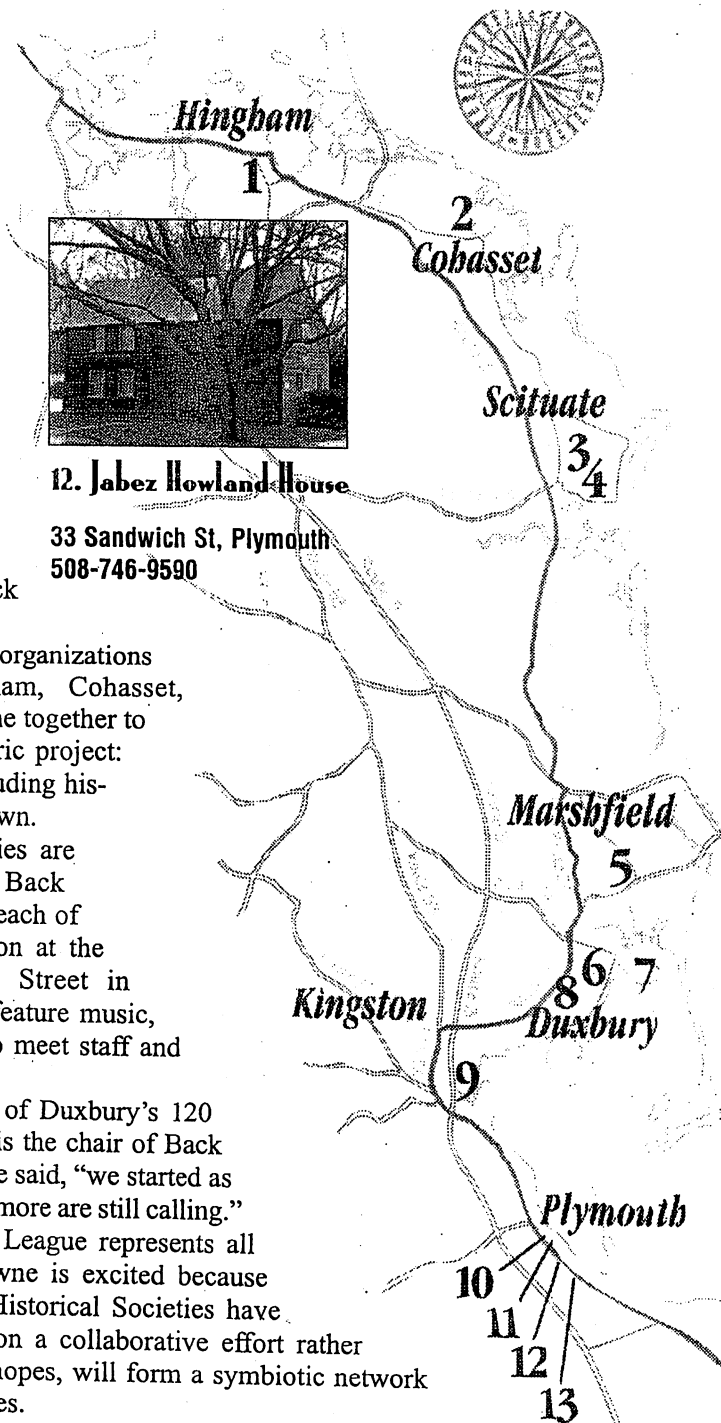
In summer 2002, ten historical organizations from Scituate, Marshfield, Hingham, Cohasset, Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury came together to start the area's first cooperative historic project: the coordination of a scenic route including historic homes from each participating town.

This Saturday, June 28 the societies are celebrating the completion of the Back Roads project with free tours through each of the homes from 11-3, with a reception at the Winslow House on 644 Careswell Street in Marshfield from 4-6. The event will feature music, hors d'oeuvres, and the opportunity to meet staff and volunteers of local historical societies.

Patrick Browne, executive director of Duxbury's 120 year-old Rural and Historical Society, is the chair of Back Roads. "The project just snowballed" he said, "we started as three organizations, are now at ten, and more are still calling."

Although the Bay State Historical League represents all historic sights in Massachusetts, Browne is excited because "this is the first time South Shore's Historical Societies have cohesively come together." Working on a collaborative effort rather than on smaller, individual levels, he hopes, will form a symbiotic network among the previously unrelated societies.

from Back Roads to Front Doors



12. Jabez Howland House

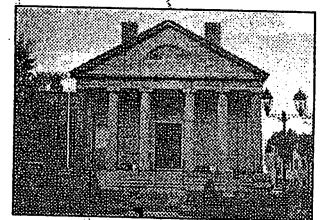
33 Sandwich St, Plymouth
508-746-9590



6. Alden House Historic Site

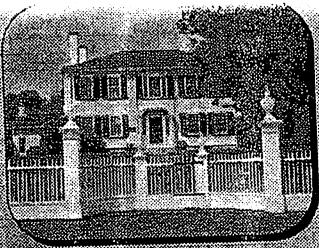
105 Alden St, Duxbury
781-934-9092; www.alden.org

Homestead of famous Pilgrims John and Priscilla Alden. Built in the mid 1600's, the house grew through three centuries into a large, comfortable dwelling occupied by Alden descendants until the 1920's. Furnished with period antiques, the Alden House provides an intimate experience of family life in early New England.



10. Pilgrim Hall Museum

75 Court St, Plymouth
508-746-1620;
www.pilgrimhall.org



7

120 King Caesar Rd, Duxbury
781-934-6106; www.duxburyhistory.org

Built in 1809, the house belonged to Ezra Weston, known as "King Caesar" for his preeminence in shipbuilding and worldwide trade. Represented as it appeared in 1820, the house displays Federal period furnishings and artifacts pertaining to shipbuilding in Duxbury. Two galleries feature rotating exhibits.

Before working with Back Roads, Scituate Historical Society member Betty Meisner said each society tended to keep to themselves. "We knew one another, but there was not much interaction," she said. "The extent of our relationships would be to say 'hi' in passing." Fellow member and Scituate's Back Roads representative, Yvonne Twomey, said that before, news on their events and activities were only mentioned in their own bulletin, but they have been included in numerous articles and publications since joining Back Roads. "Working together and sharing ideas raises awareness that we're here," said an excited Browne.

After several monthly meetings with a representative from each society, the group created a professional full color pamphlet. Four inside panels open into a map of the South Shore with a highlighted route including all of the sights. Each home is marked with a number and includes a photo and brief description.

Excepting Plymouth's Pilgrim Hall Museum which holds household artifacts, all of the sights on the tour were once family homes specifically chosen to give an intimate and focused look into American life from the Pilgrim to the Federal periods.

Built in 1667, the Jabez Howland House in Plymouth is the only home other than the Alden House to have been inhabited by Pilgrims. Letters from Howland's famous descendants Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill are displayed in the house.

The "Old Ordinary" in Hingham, built in the 1680's, was operated as a tavern or "ordinary," serving the "ordinary meal of the day." It displays 17th, 18th, and 19th century furnishings, tools, and artifacts in 14 rooms.

Five generations of one family lived in the 1749 Spooner House in Plymouth, leaving a spectrum of historic artifacts from the American Revolution into the 20th century. It includes stories of local mariners, merchants, patriots, slaves, and reformers.

The pamphlet was designed and produced by Norman R. Forgit Graphic Design, in cooperation with the Plymouth County Convention and Visitors Bureau. It was sponsored in part by Radisson, Jack Conway & Co. Realtors, Plymouth County Development Council, and a host of other corporations. The Council is thrilled with the new project, confident that it will attract more people to discovering Plymouth County's history.

The pamphlet will serve as a guide for tourists to Boston or the Cape who want a well organized day trip. Curator of the Alden House, Jim Baker, thinks Back Roads "will also encourage locals to see museums out of their own sphere," and realize that all the houses are "connected in the evolution of the South Shore and American life over the past 350 years." Most people have never visited sights in their own town, let alone those in surrounding towns, and the connection, he

says, will "get people who would otherwise not come."

The group is confident that Back Roads is only the beginning of their formal forum. They hope to work on common calendars, collaborate workshops, and initiate more cooperative projects. From techniques on preserving objects to presenting exhibits, "all groups have something to learn from one another," said Browne.

Pamphlets with directions can be found at Duxbury's Rural and Historical Society in the Nathaniel Winsor House on Washington Street, at the Alden House near the Library, or online at the project's new sight: www.southshorebackroads.org.



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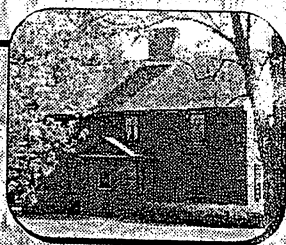
—Patrick Browne, executive director of Duxbury's 120 year-old Rural and Historical Society



8. Captain Gershom Bradford House

931 Tremont St, Duxbury
781-934-6106 www.duxburyhistory.org

A fascinating time capsule, the house was donated to the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society furnished with family belongings. It offers an opportunity to see the home of a successful Duxbury mariner, much as he left it in 1840.



644 Careswell St,
Marshfield
781-837-5753
www.marshfield.net/History/winslow.html

Reception at the Winslow House Saturday, June 28 • 4 to 6 p.m.

Built c. 1699 by the Honorable Isaac Winslow, grandson of Mayflower passenger Edward Winslow. This family manor house, "Careswell," was named for their ancestral home in England. Come hear about the Winslow families who lived and raised their families here as we chronicle over 200 years of daily life in early America.